

# Blue Ridge Health District

## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021



**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

*To protect the health and promote the  
well-being of all people in Virginia.*





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## WHO WE ARE

The Blue Health District (BRHD) is one of 35 health districts under the Virginia Department of Health. We are comprised of six health departments that serve the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson, along with the city of Charlottesville. Our local health departments provide public health services to over 250,000 residents.

## OUR MISSION

To protect and promote the health and well-being of all Virginians.

## OUR VISION

Healthy people living in healthy communities.

## BRHD LOCATIONS

### CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1138 Rose Hill Drive  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
(434) 972-6200

### LOUISA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Health Clinic Services  
540 Industrial Drive  
Louisa, VA 23093  
(540) 967-3703

### FLUVANNA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

132 Main Street  
Palmyra, VA 22963  
(434) 591-1960

Environmental Health  
1 Woolfolk Avenue  
Louisa, VA 23093  
(540) 967-3707

### GREENE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

50 Stanard Street  
Stanardsville, VA 22973  
(434) 985-2262

### NELSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

4038 Thomas Nelson Highway  
Arrington, VA 22922  
(434) 263-8315



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:



Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020 - June 2021) was quite a year of transition for the Blue Ridge Health District. Notably, in January 2021, we changed our name and rebranded from the Thomas Jefferson Health District to the Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD). This change reflects our District's commitment to ensuring that our public health services are inclusive and welcoming to all of the communities served. Blue Ridge Health District also aligns with other health districts in Virginia, where the majority are named after regional geography. This name change is symbolic of the deeper work we are doing as an organization to create an inclusive, equitable environment for our staff and clients

Rebranding of the Blue Ridge Health District also serves to acknowledge and address the impact of racism on health. COVID-19 has been a clear demonstration of this injustice and the importance of continued efforts to create change. Since this pandemic began, 300 BRHD community members have lost their lives and nearly 1,000 have been hospitalized. A higher proportion of these were African American or Latino. To meet our mission of ensuring the health and wellbeing of every community member, we have worked closely with the community to provide services that were more convenient and easier to access. Thanks to our many partners, for example, we now have a mobile health unit that is providing vaccination services close to homes and at convenient hours. Our goal is to continue expanding this model of equitable, accessible health services to more health department programs in the coming months.

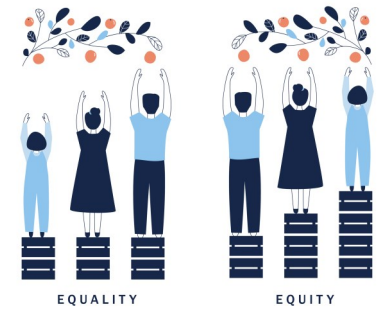
When COVID-19 was first identified in BRHD in March 2020, we could not imagine what was to come. Since that time, our staff has nearly tripled in order to support a variety of COVID-19 response efforts ranging from contact tracing, Executive Order enforcement, hotline operations, vaccinations, and more. While some of our clinical services were put on hold, other programs, like WIC, found ways to successfully increase participation while being offered virtually.

Fiscal Year 2021 shaped public health. It is a year that our community will never forget and a time when our staff flourished as leaders of health and safety during a global pandemic. We are thankful for their dedication and the many invaluable partnerships with leaders, organizations, and community members throughout the District and Commonwealth. Learn more about our past year of accomplishments in this FY21 Annual Report.

Denise Bonds, MD, MPH  
Director, Blue Ridge Health District  
Virginia Department of Health

# HEALTH EQUITY

Health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being in which disease and infirmity are absent (World Health Organization). Traditionally, health is viewed as the product of people's health behaviors and lifestyle, their family history and genes, and the care received from their doctor(s) and other health service providers. However, where we live, work, play, and pray (social determinants of health) have an equally important impact on our health and well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that while 50% of our overall health is due to individual health behaviors and the clinical care we receive, the other 50% is due to social, economic, and environmental factors. Health is the result of more than just going to the doctor when you're sick. In fact, your housing, transportation, job, education, and the environment around you impact choices available to you and the care you receive. Long-standing racism, poverty, and other systems of oppression make it unsafe for people to live, work, and learn.



The Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD) believes that working together with community members and organizational partners to change these factors and to recognize and address injustice in our systems and policies will make the largest impact on community health.

## Our Equity Statement

BRHD is committed to equity as both a process and an outcome. We envision a thriving community, free of racism, discrimination, and poverty, where everyone has the opportunities and the resources for optimal health.

## 21 Day challenge

The 21 day challenge is a semi-annual equity training, adopted from Albemarle County's challenge, that BRHD hosts for all staff. During this training series, we encourage staff to read, watch, and/or listen to materials for 21 days to grow their understanding of a variety of equity topics. Currently our topics include race and ethnicity, sexuality, religion, disability, mental health, food apartheid, social determinants of health, and environmental equity. During the challenge, weekly discussions are held to help staff digest and understand the information and encourage staff to use the information to be more equitable in their professional and personal lives.

## Equity Luncheon

In an effort to continue conversations around equity, in lieu of the 21 day challenge, the "Equity Luncheons" were created. These luncheons take topics discussed in the 21 Day Challenge and look at them more in depth, giving participants the ability to do more research on the specific topics within the broader categories of health equity. Discussions are held monthly to give staff a chance to talk about the subject. The Equity Committee also invites community and organization members who are knowledgeable or have lived experience in the topic to help build our understanding of the subjects.

# COVID-19 Response

The first COVID-19 case in BRHD was identified in March of 2020. Since then, BRHD services have been impacted and staffing shifted to focus on COVID-19 response. A large part of our response is monitoring and tracking positive cases and exposures in the District. A critical part of this is also testing - BRHD launched a free drive-through testing program in the Spring of 2020 that continues to be a valued resource for hundreds of community members each week.

Case investigations are when we call someone confirmed as a positive case or identified as a probable case. We call 1-3 times and these calls most often lead to a successful interview or being unable to reach the case.

In general, VDH defines an Outbreak as two or more cases related in person/place/time. An Outbreak is closed 28 days (2 incubation cycles) after it is opened, indicating that spread in a given location has been successfully stopped. In addition to opening, closing, and tracking outbreaks of COVID-19, BRHD helps businesses and organizations to implement a number of mitigation strategies in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Below is an overview of COVID-19 efforts that BRHD conducted in Fiscal Year 2021:

## 75 COVID-19 Outbreaks Closed

Albemarle	30
Charlottesville	27
Fluvanna	5
Greene	4
Louisa	4
Nelson	5

## 3,845 PCR Tests Conducted by BRHD

Albemarle	2,049
Charlottesville	1,382
Fluvanna	776
Greene	518
Louisa	533
Nelson	636

## 11,881 Case Investigations

1 case = 1-20 close contacts

Charlottesville/Albemarle	7,449
Fluvanna	994
Greene	1,072
Louisa	1,620
Nelson	746



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

Established in April of 2020, the BRHD COVID Resource Hotline was one of the first hotlines in Virginia dedicated to assisting with COVID response. What began as a single phone staffed by a rotation of BRHD Public Health Nurses quickly grew into a team of half a dozen full time operators, a team of Medical Reserve Corps. volunteers, and, at one point, the capacity for over 21 phone lines. Operators answer calls Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm from throughout the District and beyond, providing the latest information on COVID, scheduling tests and vaccines, providing healthy and safety resources, and much more.

Over 60,000  
COVID Hotline Calls



**Jada Howard**, BRHD Hotline Operator

"There are many reasons that I come to work on the hotline every day, but the most important reason is knowing that I can help! Not only am I helping someone, they are giving back to me in return. That's what's important: helping each other.

I truly enjoy my job! It's a great feeling when you pick up the phone and say, "Blue Ridge Health District COVID Hotline - How may I help you?" You know you're about to help someone's life. I'm so glad that the BRHD gave me this wonderful opportunity to be a part of this amazing community!

In January 2021, the District began administering COVID-19 vaccines. In accordance with state and federal guidelines, the initial vaccine roll-out was a phased approach which prioritized healthcare providers and then those at highest risk of severe infection and death due to age, medical conditions, and by occupation. Over the next several months, clinics expanded to include semi-permanent modular structures in the former Kmart parking lot, a mass vaccination site in the former JC Penney store in Charlottesville, local health departments, and a number of community sites at churches, businesses, and schools. In June, Governor Northam attended the dedication of Mobi, BRHD's new, state of the art mobile health clinic that has taken vaccines into neighborhoods throughout the District.

## 249 Vaccination Clinics

Charlottesville/Albemarle	141
Fluvanna	17
Greene	13
Louisa	12
Nelson	19
Mobile/Ad Hoc	47

## 75,263 Vaccines Administered by BRHD

Charlottesville/Albemarle	70,029
Fluvanna	1,010
Greene	1,274
Louisa	2,204
Nelson	759



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

BRHD Environmental Health includes Food Protection, Onsite Sewage Disposal/Water, and General Environmental Health programs. Staff provide education to the public and agencies to protect and promote the health of the community, and ensure safety by enforcing regulations and laws. The Vital Records Office records deaths and issues death, birth, marriage, and divorce certificates.

In FY21, the BRHD Environmental Health teams were instrumental in COVID response. EH personnel were tasked with investigating all local level complaints and violations of Executive Orders pertaining to COVID safety. Staff investigated complaints, visited businesses, and provided guidance on maintaining the health of the community in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders.

## 1,400 Sewage Disposal System Applications Received



Albemarle	526
Charlottesville	2
Fluvanna	102
Greene	172
Louisa	480
Nelson	119

## 184 Food Service Establishment Inspections



Albemarle	84
Charlottesville	59
Fluvanna	4
Greene	30
Louisa	5
Nelson	2

## 18 Temporary Event Vendors Permitted



Albemarle	8
Charlottesville	0
Fluvanna	2
Greene	3
Louisa	2
Nelson	1

## 248 Rabies Cases Investigated



Albemarle	62
Charlottesville	26
Fluvanna	25
Greene	40
Louisa	42
Nelson	24
No Locality	29

## 1,662 COVID Complaints Handled



## 18,479 Vital Records Issued

(includes duplicate copies)

Albemarle	5,111
Charlottesville	6,821
Fluvanna	2,171
Greene	1,358
Louisa	1,780
Nelson	1,238



# CLINICAL SERVICES

While most of the health department staffing was pivoted towards COVID-19 response, many essential clinical services continued to be provided by our team. These services include but are not limited to pre-admission screenings for long-term care services, family planning which includes birth control, and pregnancy and STI screenings. TB screenings and treatment continued to be provided, and in addition to the COVID-specific vaccines, immunizations continued to be provided for school, travel, and general health needs.

**591**

## Pre-admission Screenings



Charlottesville/Albemarle	526
Fluvanna	59
Greene	41
Louisa	137
Nelson	45



## 366 Family Planning Clients Served

Charlottesville/Albemarle	132
Fluvanna	32
Greene	64
Louisa	96
Nelson	42



## 2,111 Non-COVID Vaccines Administered

Charlottesville/Albemarle	1,215
Fluvanna	59
Greene	41
Louisa	137
Nelson	45



## 295 TB Clients Served

Charlottesville/Albemarle	119
Fluvanna	50
Greene	42
Louisa	72
Nelson	12



# YANCEY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER:

In July of 2020, BRHD opened the Yancey Community Health Center. Located in the town of Esmont in southern Albemarle county, the clinic offers services such as Family Planning, Outreach and Resources, Health Education, Advocacy, and Social Support. This year, the clinic has also served as the location for a number of neighborhood COVID vaccination clinics. The clinic is staffed by a Community Health Worker.



# NARCAN

## 108 Boxes of Narcan Nasal Spray Distributed

<b>Charlottesville/Albemarle</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>9</b>



BRHD provides Naloxone (Narcan) free of charge to community members, first responders and community agencies to prevent fatal opioid overdoses in the community. In an effort to make Narcan more accessible to all, BRHD provides monthly drive-thru and walk-up Narcan distribution in each of the localities throughout the district. During this event,

community members receive Rapid Revive training on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose and how to administer Narcan. Each participant leaves with a box of Narcan and a safety kit that provides protection to them during an opioid response emergency.

## SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

Sexual health clinics offer testing for a variety of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as appropriate follow-up and education. BRHD is a leader in sexual health and has strived to make the clinic inclusive to all to decrease the stigma associated with STI testing. BRHD offers HIV prevention medication (PrEP) case management services to anyone at high risk of getting HIV, as well as an expedited testing clinic once each month to help reduce barriers to testing opportunities.

323

### Sexual Health Visits



<b>Charlottesville/Albemarle</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>6</b>

### 808 Rapid HIV & Hep C Tests Provided



<b>Charlottesville/Albemarle</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>63</b>

### 106,669 Condoms Distributed



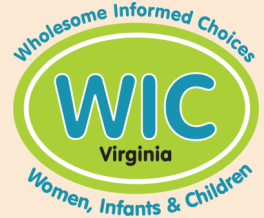
<b>Charlottesville/Albemarle</b>	<b>93,241</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>1,144</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>8,412</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>3,824</b>

# WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN (WIC)

The WIC program adjusted to COVID-19 starting at the end of March 2020 by going completely remote and virtual. All of our regular services and operations have been completed remotely by phone since April 2020. We have seen an increase in our monthly caseload from 2,478 (pre December 2019) to 2,676 (post December 2019). The WIC program continues to offer individual counseling appointments with a Nutritionist by phone as well as all nutrition education completed one-on-one with a nutrition staff member by phone. All breastfeeding contacts are also completed by phone. All WIC clients continue to receive their WIC benefits as normal. Changes to WIC benefits to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic have included waivers to expand the selections of WIC eligible foods in grocery stores and temporary increase to cash value benefits for purchasing fruits and vegetables. Due to COVID-19, all WIC services and appointments will remain by phone through the beginning of 2022.

**2,685**

**Average  
Monthly  
Caseload**



<b>Charlottesville/Albemarle</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Southwood</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>393</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>230</b>

## EPIDEMIOLOGY

BRHD investigates communicable disease reports from healthcare providers and labs to identify community health problems. When communicable disease outbreaks occur, BRHD works to determine the source and to stop the spread of disease through education, infection control measures, post-exposure prophylaxis recommendations, community surveillance, and immunization. BRHD also conducts surveillance in conjunction with the state, by monitoring health data from emergency departments and urgent care centers, which adds to the tracking surveillance data.

**950**

**Reported Disease  
Cases Investigated**

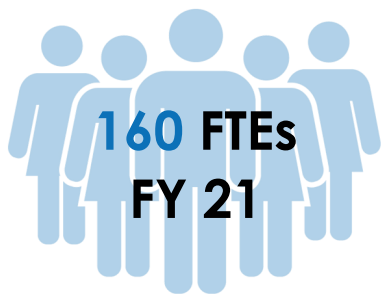
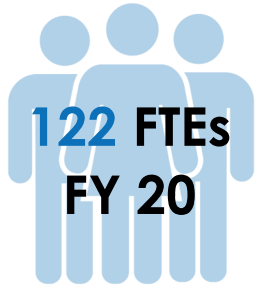
<b>Albemarle</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>Charlottesville</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Fluvanna</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Greene</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Louisa</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>64</b>



These practices assist the epidemiologist and communicable disease staff to quickly identify, respond to, and prevent disease outbreaks.



# HUMAN RE-

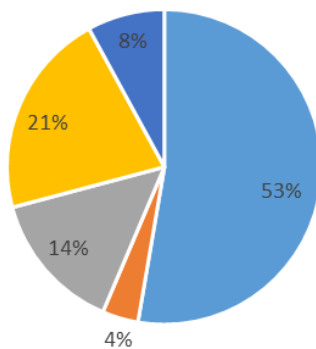


June 30, 2020	
Full-Time	82
Wage	2
Contract (Non-COVID)	9
CDC	2
COVID Contractors	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>

June 30, 2021	
Full-Time	71
Wage	2
Contract (Non-COVID)	14
CDC	2
COVID Contractors	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>

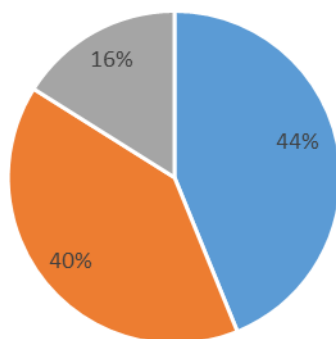
# BUDGET (INCOME):

Revenue



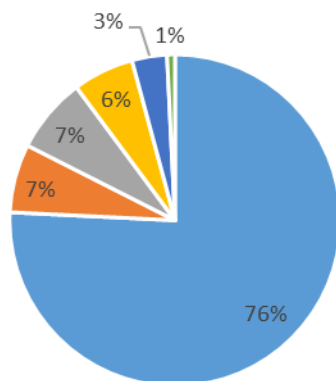
■ Environmental Health ■ Family Planning ■ General Medical ■ Administrative ■ MCH

Funding



■ State ■ Local ■ Revenue

Expenses



■ Salary/Benefits ■ Clerical ■ Building ■ Supplies ■ VITA ■ Misc

